

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (currently amended) Stable slurries for use in the manufacturing of shells for investment casting of metals and for use in the manufacturing of mould and core coatings for metal casting, comprising

 a silica or alumina sol ~~having a pH of between 9.5—11;~~

 a mineral in finely divided particles including trivalent or tetravalent cations; and

 at least 0.01% by weight of a water soluble salt to convert the trivalent or tetravalent cations to moieties that are unable to cause flocculation of the slurries.

Claim 2. (cancelled)

Claim 3. (currently amended) The slurries according to claim 1, wherein the cationic component is one or more of iron, aluminum or zirconium compounds present in the mineral or in water; and wherein the compounds comprise ferrous chromite, ~~ferrosoferrie and ferrie oxide~~, olivine (mixed magnesium and iron^{II} silicates), norite, ~~ferruginous zircon, ferruginous alumina~~ and ferruginous mullite (aluminum silicate).

Claims 4 – 8 (cancelled)

Claim 9. (currently amended) The slurries according to claim 1, wherein the water soluble salt is selected from one or more of an alkali phosphate, including trisodium or tripotassium; ~~a complexing agent including sodium EDTA;~~ or a reducing agent including sodium or potassium hypophosphite ~~or potassium or sodium sulphite~~; and wherein the water soluble salt is added to the silica or alumina sol prior to the silica or alumina sol being mixed with the mineral.

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Claims 10 – 15 (cancelled)